

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6766

INFO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 10775

DEPT PASS AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS TREATMENT OF THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR
CONTROVERSY

REF: NEW DELHI 10693

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE PRESS CONTINUES TO PLAY THE SUBJECT
PROMINENTLY, BUT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS REFLECT A PROBABLE
BEHIND-SCENE GOI EFFORT TO SHIFT THE BLAME FOR THE CONTROVERSY
TO THE AMERICAN PRESS. EARLIER, INDIAN VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS HAD
WEIGHED IN WITH AN ALMOST UNANIMOUS OUTCRY AGAINST THE REPORTED
GOI RESTRICTION ON SCHOLARS. END SUMMARY.

1. THREE LEADING ENGLISH - LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS TODAY, (1) INDIAN
EXPRESS (CIRC. 448,018), (2) HINDUSTAN TIMES (CIRC. 150,000) AND
THE TIMES OF INDIA (CIRC. 244,781) CARRY INSIDE PAGE STORIES UNDER
TWO-COLUMN HEADLINES THAT RANGE FROM "ANTI-US TILT DENIED IN
GUIDELINES TO SCHOLARS", TO "GUIDELINES FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS NOT
BIASED" AND "NO PREJUDICE AGAINST AMERICAN SCHOLARS.";

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2. ALL THREE STORIES ARE BASED ON A LENGTHY RELEASE TODAY FROM THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) WIRE SERVICE, WHICH REPORTS THAT IT HAS BEEN "AUTHORITATIVELY STATED HERE" THAT GUIDELINES FOR FOREIGN SCHOLARS

DO NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANY COUNTRY. THE STORY BEGS THE QUESTION BY OUTLINING IN DREARY DETAIL THE PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS UNDER WHICH FOREIGN STUDENTS ARE ACCEPTED IN INDIA AND MENTIONS ONLY NEAR THE END WITH MOST READERS SAFELY ASLEEP, THAT ONLY FOR POST-GRADUATE STUDIES HAS THE LIMIT BEEN SET AT TWENTY.

3. MEANWHILE, RUMORS ARE BUZZING IN DELHI PRESS CIRCLES THAT THERE WILL BE A GOI BRIEFING ON THE SUBJECT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS TODAY OR TOMORROW. WE WILL REPORT ON IT WHEN AND IF IT TAKES PLACE.

4. YESTERDAY, IN A FRONTPAGE STORY FROM WASHINGTON CHARGING THAT THE "US PRESS MISREPRESENTS DELHI STAND", THE TIME OF INDIA HINTED THAT AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN MAY BE THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE. REPORTING THAT INDIAN OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON "ARE AGHAST AT THE REPEATED ATTEMPTS IN THE AMERICAN PRESS TO MISREPRESENT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION REGARDING ADMISSION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS TO INDIA", THE TIMES NOTED THAT EDITORIALS ON THE SUBJECT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE LOS ANGELES TIMES "COINCIDED WITH AMBASSADOR DANIEL MOYNIHAN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATION."

5. ALSO YESTERDAY THE HINDUSTAN STANDARD OF CALCUTTA (CIRC.66,264) COMMENTED THAT "IN DEMANDING AN EARNEST FROM INDIA SO THAT OTHER NEIGHBORS WOULD NOT FEEL ANY LACK OF SECURITY, DR. KISSINGER HAS NOT BEEN HELPFUL; NOR THOSE WHO COMPLAIN THAT A GENERAL RESTRICTION ON POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN THIS COUNTRY BY FOREIGNERS IS DIRECTED AGAINST THE US."

6. TODAY'S URDU-LANGUAGE SMALL-CIRCULATING BUT INFLUENTIAL MUSLIM NEWSPAPER ALJAMIAT (CIRC.8,000) STOUTLY DEFENDS INDIA'S RIGHT "TO LIMIT THE EXCHANGE OF SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS", AND ARGUES THAT "AMERICANS WHO VISIT IN DIFFERENT GARBS ARE INFLUENCING OUR SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DOING HARM IN VARIOUS WAYS ...MANY VISITING AMERICANS EVEN INDULGE IN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES IN THE NAME OF RESEARCH. WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOI SHOULD IMPOSE A LIMIT ON SUCH VISITING TOURISTS ALSO WHO INTERFERE IN OUR SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL LIFE, AND LATER PROJECT INDIA THROUGH BOOKS, PICTURES AND UNCLASSIFIED

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TELEVISION FILMS IN A MANNER THAT BRINGS A BAD NAME TO US."

7. FOR THE PAST WEEK HOWEVER, LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN THE PROVINCES HAVE CRIED HAVOC, WITH THE CENTRAL ARGUMENT BEING THAT THE SCHOLAR EXCHANGES DESPITE POSSIBLE IMPERFECTIONS ARE IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST OF BOTH INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES. AS ONE GUJARATI-LANGUAGE PAPER, LOKSATTA (CIRC. 28,000) PUT IT: "WE HAVE GRIEVANCES AGAINST AMERICA, BUT ACTING IN THIS MANNER BETRAYS LACK OF WISDOM."

8. CLIPPINGS ARE BEING SENT BY AIR FOR THE ATTENTION OF
AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN.

9. SINCE THE CONTROVERSY AROSE IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, GOI
OFFICIALS HAVE NOT MENTIONED OR REFERRED TO THE SUBJECT OF SCHOLAR
EXCHANGES IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS.SCHNEIDER

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